Dear Sirs and Madames,

My name is Ashlin Marsh and I am writing this testimony in reference to House Bill 5286 An Act Concerning the Development of a New Preservice Performance Assessment For Teacher Preparation Program. I am 35 years old and am a current student at CCSU getting my BS in Secondary Chemistry Education. I am in process of the student teaching program and am placed with a wonderful host teacher at New Britain High School. I am not your typical college student. It has taken me 18 years to get the point of college graduation, which I will complete in May. I have surmounted a lot of obstacles to get here. During my time as a college student I got married, had two children, and lost 2 grandparents, not to mention survived a pandemic and continued working throughout. These are hard times and everything takes a hit. We adapt and persevere. I am willing to do what is necessary for success, but I have to question when things seem unnecessarily difficult for the sake of money. Honestly, edTPA seems like one of those unnecessary obstacles to profit the Pearson corporation. Teaching is a necessary and difficult job. It does not pay enough, the hours are long, the support is dwindling, as is the funding. Teacher unions have to fight for their needs to be met, and students are getting more and more out of control with little consequence. I see all of this happening around me at New Britain High School but I am not naïve in thinking this is happening elsewhere. All of that is to say that myself and my classmates are still choosing to go into this profession with great intentions for molding a brighter future and educating generations to come. In order for us to complete our education and get certified as teachers we must complete a bachelor's degree, which is expensive. We must pass 2 praxis exams, which are expensive. We must maintain essentially a full time career while student teaching, without pay. It is strongly recommended that we don't have an outside job while doing this, I ask you who can afford that? Then on top of that, as we are learning to be in a classroom for the first time ever, we are expected to video tape ourselves and our students to showcase the best 10 consecutive minutes of our 16 weeks in the classroom while acting completely "normal". Those consecutive 10 minutes need to be in the first half of our 16 weeks, when we are very new to the field, and we won't receive feedback for weeks. I am not opposed to writing incredibly detailed lesson plans to explain my reasoning and show that I have put thought into meeting the needs of all students. I am not opposed to having a university supervisor come in to the classroom and see how I handle myself with students and deal with different situations. I welcome those things because I am learning. I need the feedback and mentorship of my host teacher and university supervisor. I will most certainly make mistakes and I will no doubt learn from those and do things differently moving forward. What I do not welcome is added stress and a $300 bill to check a box that adds no value to my education or ability. This year students do not even need a passing score from edTPA to receive the certification, just to submit it. Just to write the check and make sure Pearson gets their money. What is the purpose of this? I understand that we need state certification. I ask why are the praxis exams and a college degree not enough? We are required to obtain a master's degree within the first 9 years of being in the classroom, which ensures continuing education. We are required, once working, to complete regular self-assessments, professional development, further education, seminars, performance assessments, etc. It is not as though there is a lack of checks and balances. Please, I urge you, make this process less difficult and more about encouraging the students that against all odds still want to become educators. Give us the support that we need. Stop requiring us to empty our pockets to choose groceries or state certification. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Ashlin Marsh